All Quiet on the Western Front

Post #5

Chapters 11-12

1/6/12

Chapters 11 and 12 and very depressing in my mind. They begin with The Second Company contemplating their time in the war and realizing that have become de-individualized men. Germany basically has stripped them of any true identity and to the country, they are just a number, a statistic. Throughout Chapter 11, life darkens for Paul as his closest friends begin to lose their lives. Muller is shot in the abdomen and Detering deserts the army, only to later be captured and tried as a deserter. The most horrifying loss comes when Paul’s close friend Kat is wounded and Paul picks him and attempts to run him to a safe area, all while shells are exploding around them. When Paul reaches safety he looks down and realizes that is only remaining friend has been hit in the head by a fragment of exploding shell and has died in Paul’s arms. In Chapter 12, the year is now 1918, the final year of the Great War and Paul is the only surviving member of his original classmates. Paul’s spirits are extremely low and with news of peace on the horizon coupled the deaths of his friends, he has no real motivation to fight hard. Paul also comes to the realization that an entire generation of men from his hometown have lost from dying in the war. It is a generation that will never be replaced. The book ends in a rather sad and ironic way. The last page is two paragraphs written from the point of view of an unknown narrator, which is different from the rest of the book that was written in Paul’s point of view. In the final paragraphs it is written, “He fell in October 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front, that the army report confined itself to a single sentence: All quiet on the Western Front.

This book was such a vivid, realistic, and depressing account of possibly the most horrific war ever fought. Remarque did a fantastic job of delving into the characters of the story and that helped me to relate to the emotions that come with war. Paul seemed to be a young man that was trapped in a storm where all around him, things were going wrong and his best friends were dying. His inner conflict was the main focus of the story but what I found interesting was how he had to deal with death around him while he himself only suffered minor injuries in comparison. I think that all of the pain and suffering that Paul saw eventually took over his mind and wore him down because in the end it seemed as if Paul wanted to die in order for it all to go away. The war slowly washed away Paul’s individuality, his personality, his spirit, and his love for life. I also notice how much Paul seems to age through the war even though it was only a few years. He went from a young, naïve soldier to a grizzled, embattled man as World War I went on.

These last two chapters really showed me a lot about human nature. I’ve seen through, Paul, that it is human nature to wear down under intense stress and traumatic experiences. I saw it in the way Paul’ s demeanor changed from start of war to end of war because the human body has it’s limits. I think that for the majority of people, their limits aren’t tested the way that soldiers have their limits tested. You and are aren’t seeing our closest friends die in our harms the way Kat died in Paul’s arms. Also, I feel like a human ideal is to yearn for individuality. I repetitive theme in the book was that Paul was losing his identity and individuality during the war. I believe that one human belief is that individuality is important and needed. Everyone must have their own unique identity. Over, All Quiet on the Western Front was a terrific book.